

United States Air Force Auxiliary
Civil Air Patrol

The Western WATCH

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www.pcr-chaplain.org

Chaplain Whit Woodard
Region Chaplain
pcr-hc@echogroup.com

Chaplain Chuck James
Deputy Region Chaplain
Dean of Chaplain Staff College
cbjames9@msn.com

Chaplain Paul Ward
Assistant for
Professional Development
oward@cawg.cap.gov

Lt Col Jackie De Costa
Publications, Photography,
Graphics, Newsletter Editor
sky1babe@aol.com

1LT Adelle McKinney
Public Affairs
wfji@aol.com

Chaplain Donald Starr
Special Advisor

Notice To Readers

The Western WATCH is published quarterly by the Civil Air Patrol Pacific Region Chaplain Service. Submissions may be sent to:

LtCol Jackie De Costa,
2356 Applewood Circle, Fullerton, CA 92833. ([Sky1babe @ AOL.com](mailto:Sky1babe@AOL.com)) The newsletter is distributed to Pacific Region Chaplains and Moral Leadership officers, staff members, and interested parties.



The Newsletter of the
Pacific Region Chaplain Service
PO Box 473, Rocklin, CA 95677

Semper Vigilans ad Dei Glorium

Remarks from the Region Chaplain



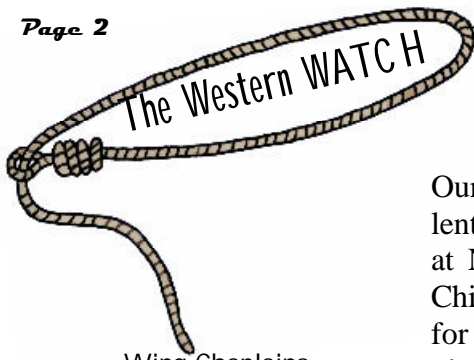
Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Woodard

There is a new face to our Pacific Region Chaplain Service newsletter. You will note a new name and format. Since we are utilizing the internet as our means of distribution instead of "snail mail," we are endeavoring to produce a publication that is more user friendly to the online reader. I hope you enjoy it and will find it to be a blessing. The new format and distribution will enable us to provide you with more information than would be possible in a printed form. The last three pages, for instance, is a useful article on Jewish death rituals that I believe will be a practical addition to the files of our chaplains. That information is laid out in traditional print format so that you can read the newsletter online and then print out the last article for filing. (Of course, you may print out the entire newsletter if you wish.) A special word of appreciation is due LTC Jackie De Costa, who has done so much to design a unique logo for us; and to assemble our quarterly newsletters and other publications.

The new name given to our newsletter is *The Western WATCH*. Western is the radio call sign for Pacific Region communications. The Region Chaplain is "Western 5." Our use of the word *watch* suggests the ministry of chaplaincy as shepherds who watch out for the flock. God gave instruction in Nahum 2:1 to "*Man the fort!*" and "*Watch the road!*" As models of ministry, we ought to be faithful to watch. In the New Testament we are charged to "*Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is.*" (Mark 13:33) As a chaplain service we are always preparing for the time when crisis may strike and we are called upon to encourage and comfort those for whom we watch. 1 Corinthians 16:13 counsels us to "*Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.*" It is a noble and valiant calling. "*Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.*" (1 Thessalonians 5:6) We wrap all of these admonitions into the objective of becoming models of ministry, epitomizing all that is expected of a dedicated senior member of the USAF Auxiliary and a vigilant chaplain service.

That brings us to the new logo and motto for the Pacific Region Chaplain Service. It reminds us that we are joined together to serve in a unique fashion. As reminders of the presence of God in community and crisis we are set as watchmen upon the walls (Isaiah 62:6) *to build and plant* (Jeremiah 31:28); *to endure* (2 Timothy 4:5); and *to pray and be thankful* (Colossians 4:2). It calls for vigilance and wakefulness. Happily, the motto of our Air Force Auxiliary is *Semper Vigilans*, which means always vigilant. As a chaplain service, we have expanded on that theme by declaring *Semper Vigilans ad Dei Glorium*, or always vigilant for the glory of God. Vigilance means watchfulness and it causes us to focus on our duty. We are *The Western Watch* (might I say Western Vigilance?) for the glory of God and the care of our comrades. That is why we continually define our objective as a model of ministry, seeking to please Him as watchful servants caring for the flock.

Semper Vigilans ad Dei Glorium



Wing Chaplains

Alaska Wing
Chaplain Franklin Blodgett
revfnb@msn.com

Washington Wing
Chaplain George J. Haberer
gjhaberer3@juno.com

Oregon Wing
Chaplain Charlie Sattgast
orwg.chaplain@verizon.net

California Wing
Chaplain Paul Ward
www.cawg-chaplain.org

Nevada Wing
Chaplain Elizabeth Tattersall
flcg@nanosecond.com

Hawaii Wing
Chaplain James Merritt
j.carltonmerritt@juno.com



Pacific Region
Col. Merle V. Starr,
Commander
PO Box 8955
Lacey, WA 98509-8955
HQ, PAC. REG., CAP 1155
Barns Blvd. Ste. 106, McChord
AFB, WA 98438

<http://pcr.cap.gov>

Pacific Region Chaplain Service Staff College

Our Deputy Pacific Region Chaplain, Chuck James, has planned an excellent Chaplain Service staff college to commence on 20-23 February 2006 at Nellis AFB, NV.. This year, Lord willing, we are delighted that our Chief of CAP Chaplain Services and the immediate past Chief will join us for the event. In addition, our Pacific Region Commander has graciously planned to be with us to bring us up to date on the latest developments in CAP. Again this year, we will have job specific training for both chaplains and moral leadership officers. LTC Ned Lee, Pacific Region Director of Cadet Programs, has agreed to conduct the MLO training and be the Master of Ceremonies for our graduation banquet. I guarantee it will be a profitable and entertaining time.

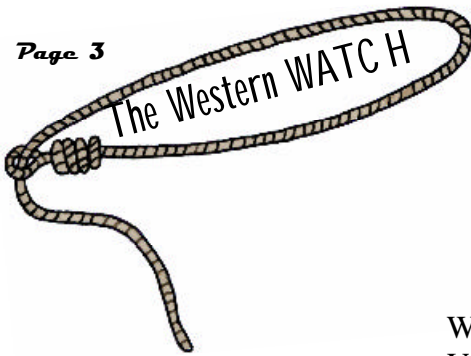
The staff college will be held in the Threat Facility at Nellis. You will have the opportunity to see and feel real weapons and equipment employed by our enemies and on which our Air Force pilots are trained. It is a unique experience and promises to make our aerospace education module one that we will not soon forget. If you haven't been to Nellis before, you are in for a real treat.

Come prepared to participate in a hands on table top SAREX. This is your chance to evaluate many of the challenges of a crisis without fear of dropping the ball, and we have obtained a mission number, so you can use it to qualify for your ES rating. You won't be able to say this staff college is "the same old song and dance." MLO 1Lt Nancy Woodard will put together a chaplain choir to sing at our graduation banquet. Chaplain John Berger will lead in a voluntary sing-a-long following our opening session. It is always a highlight of the conference.

Pre-registration has already closed, but we will continue to honor registrations from chaplains and moral leadership officers as long as we can. Once the MSA is completed, we cannot guarantee quarters on the base, so don't delay. You may e-mail your registration to pcr-hc@echogroup.com. The cost is only \$35 per person including a flight line lunch, refreshments every morning, three nights lodging, a graduation banquet and more. What a deal!

"A thoughtful mind, when it sees a Nation's flag, sees not the flag only, but the Nation itself; and whatever may be its symbols, its insignia, he reads chiefly in the flag the Government, the principles, the truths, the history which belongs to the Nation that set it forth."

Henry Ward Beecher
from "The American Flag"



Core Values and Training

Ch (Lt. Col.) Paul Ward, Professional Development Officer

We are all familiar with the Core Values of the Civil Air Patrol: Integrity, Volunteer Service, Excellence and Respect.

For members of the Chaplain Service, these core values are pretty much a given. We are people known for integrity. We are known for our volunteer service. We are known to be people who respect others. But are we known for our striving for excellence?

The reason I pose this question is that recently Ch (Col.) Charles Sharp, National Chief of CAP Chaplain Service, gave a briefing at National Board. In his presentation, a great deal of material was covered. It was gratifying to learn from his presentation how the number of Chaplains and MLOs has increased in recent years. There is a wonderful response to the need of equipping and empowering our cadets through Moral Leadership and providing "Ministry of Presence" to all of our members. However, in his presentation there was a slide regarding the levels of training for the Chaplain Service personnel.

● ————— ●
A winner gets to the top,
looks back on those he
passed and savors his
victory...

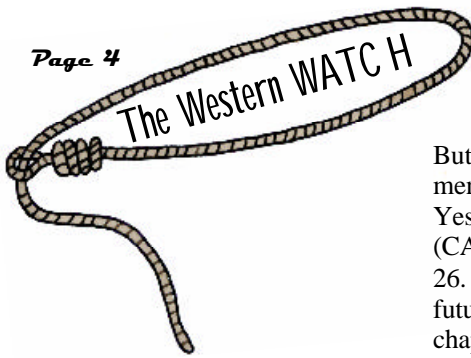
A leader gets to the top
and looks back at those
he passed to see how he
can help them achieve
the same goal.

Now the numbers for MLOs were a bit better than the Chaplains. But that is to be expected. MLOs are required to follow the Senior Member Professional Development program in order to receive their promotions. Currently, there are 298 MLOs in the CAP Chaplain Service. Here is the breakdown when it comes to training of MLOs: 221 are still at Level 1; 17 have completed Level 2 (Certificate of Proficiency); 31 have completed Level 3 (Grover Loening Award); 18 have completed Level 4 (Paul Garber Award). That means that 74% of our MLOs have not pursued their training past Level 1.

On the other hand, the Chaplain statistics on training is disheartening. Currently, there are 659 chaplains. The breakdown for the training levels for Chaplains is as follows: 593 are still at - Level 1; 10 have completed Level 2; 15 have completed Level 3; 26 have completed Level 4; 15 have attained Level 5. Nearly ninety percent (90%) of our Chaplains have not pursued their training past Level 1. Yes, you read it correctly. Ninety percent.

For MLOs, I know that the percentage of those pursuing training will grow as they seek promotions in grade. Part of the growth in the Chaplain Service has seen a large number of newly appointed Senior Members as MLOs. So personally I am not overly concerned about MLOs and their lack of training.

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But I am very much concerned about the percentage when it comes to the Chaplains. Did I mention that nearly 90% of our chaplains have not pursued their training past Level 1? Yes, I know what the regulations read regarding the Chaplains and their promotions: (CAPR 355-5 SECTION E - PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTIONS 26. Promotions. a. After initial appointment, professional personnel may be eligible for future promotions by satisfying the requirements outlined in paragraph 11, except: (3) CAP chaplains must complete ECI Course 02210/CAPP 221 for all promotions after initial appointment. Additional related training is encouraged but not required for promotion). While the regulation may allow the Chaplain to promote simply by their time-in-grade (there is a large number of those with the grade of Majors and Lt. Col. Who are at Level 1), I personally believe that we - as Chaplains - should be leading by example in our local squadrons - and that would be through the pursuit and completion of the training Levels 2 through 5.

Former Senate Chaplain Dr. Edward Everett Hale was once asked by a visitor to the Capitol if he prayed for the Senate. "No," he said. "I take one look at the Senators and I pray for the country." (Edward Hale was chaplain of the Senate from 1903 until his death in 1909. He was a Unitarian.)

From personal experience and observation, I know that there are at least 4 chaplains and 3 MLOs in the PCR Chaplain Service who have earned the Gill Robb Wilson Award. When fellow Senior Members look at the ribbon and recognize what it takes to earn it, they are encouraged to know that if a Chaplain or a MLO can earn the GRW, they can too. Senior Members also recognize that in order to attain that award, the Chaplain and the MLO has sat where they sat and have attended the various courses and events that they have.

One of the great benefits of pursuing the training awards offered by the CAP is – not only improving your own skills and increasing your own knowledge – interacting with the other Senior Members of the CAP. I can personally attest that this interaction opens the door to a more effective ministry to CAP members. During the breaks while enjoying a meal/snack or cup of coffee, sharing insights in a group discussion, even “Chaplain, can I talk with you for just a moment?” conversations are great opportunities that take place during a SLS/CLC/UCC, a staff college, or a Wing Conference.

So back to the question, “Are we known for striving for excellence?” I believe we are - if we commit ourselves to the area of training as we have committed ourselves to our other responsibilities. Check with your local squadron and ask to see what level of training is listed on the Senior Training Record (STR). Then take the necessary steps to reach the next level in our training.

Should you have any questions regarding attaining the various training level awards, please contact Ch (Lt. Col.) Paul Ward - oward@cawg.cap.gov



Food for Thought

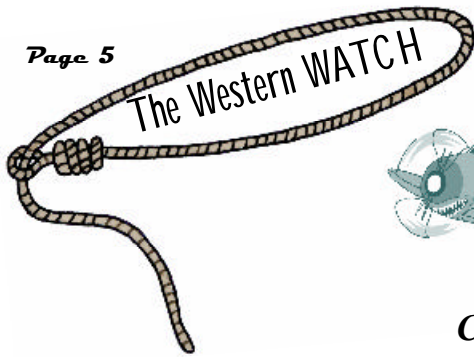
“Those who row the boat don’t rock the boat.” *Anonymous*

“Unless there is within us that which is above us, we shall soon yield to that which is about us.” *Anonymous*

“The greatest reward for doing is the opportunity to do more.”

Jonas Salk





AROUND THE REGION

California Wing

CAWG Conference/Chaplain Conference

Ch (Lt. Col.) Paul Ward, CAWG HC



The CAWG Chaplain Service and CAWG Conferences was held in Santa Maria during the week-end of October 28-30.

In the Chaplain Service Conference sessions, briefings were given regarding National, Region and Wing highlights of the year and upcoming events. Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Whit Woodard, PCR HC, challenged those in attendance with what it means to be a member of the chaplain service by using the acrostic "CHAPLAIN" in his presentation on Models for Ministry. A very informative session dealing with Professional Development was presented by Ch (Lt. Col.) Jack Nahrstadt.

During the Friday session many achievements and accomplishments by members of the CAWG Chaplain Service were recognized. Ch (Lt. Col.) Chuck Ingram was the recipient of the "Order of Flat Stanley". Ch (Capt.) Lennart Skalin received both his Loening and Garber awards by his squadron commander, Lt. Col. Gordon Ziegler.

Four steps to achievement:

- Plan purposefully;
- Prepare prayerfully;
- Proceed positively;
- Pursue persistently.

William Arthur Ward (1812-1882)

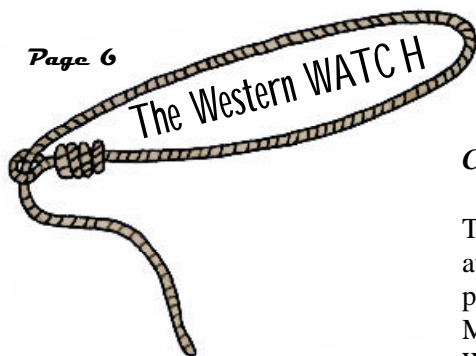
The CAWG Chaplain Service recognizes the spirit of dedication modeled by the late Chaplain Sammy Campos and the late Maj. Bruce Joyner by bestowing an award to the Chaplain and MLO who best demonstrates the values and character of Sammy and Bruce. The Chaplain Sammy Campos Award of Excellence was bestowed upon Ch (Lt. Col.) John Berger and Ch (Lt. Col.) Tim Spiller. The MLO Bruce Joyner Award of Excellence was bestowed upon Capt. Teri Contreras.

In the General Assembly on Saturday morning, two members of the CAWG Chaplain Service received awards for their outstanding service to the CAWG and CAP. 1Lt. Lonn Olfert was selected as the Outstanding MLO of the Year and Ch (Lt. Col.) Jack Nahrstadt was selected as the Outstanding Chaplain of the Year.

Following the General Assembly, Chaplain Ward conducted a session on "Implementing the Core Values Course for Senior Members." This is a course that was developed for CAWG Senior Members at the request of the Wing Commander, Col. Virginia Nelson. The material can be downloaded from the National web-site: <http://level2.cap.gov/index.cfm?nodeID=5963>

During the CAWG Banquet, those in attendance enjoyed a wonderful meal and a great time of fellowship around the tables.

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California Wing cont.

Two members of the CAWG Chaplain Service were honored with special awards. Chaplain (Lt.Col.) Del McLaughlin, was given a beautiful plaque in appreciation for 54 years of service to the CAP and a lifetime membership. Lt. Col. Marc Cohen, one of our MLOs, received the Senior Member of the Year Award. While this award sounds like it is for service rendered during the year, it is awarded to the recipient for their YEARS of service. Marc has contributed greatly to the CAWG and CAP. His work with Cadet Programs and DDR is outstanding.

APPOINTMENTS:

2Lt. Robert Tapley - MLO for Reeves Field Skyhawks Composite Sq. 471, Group 6

Chaplain (Capt.) Richard Nelson - Chaplain for Skyhawk Composite Sq. 47, Group 7



Nevada Wing

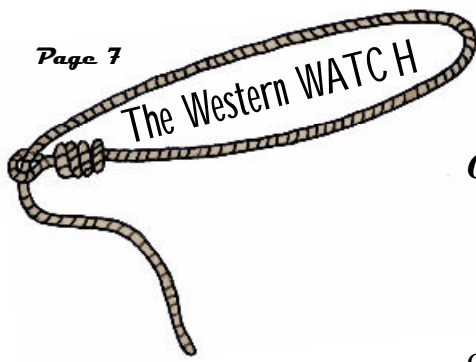
Seven chaplains, MLOs and acting MLOs attended the Chaplain/MLO session held at NV Wing Conference at Nellis AFB in November. The discussion included tips on filling out the form 34 reports, ideas for recruiting chaplains and MLOs, discussion of ways to maximize cadet participation in Character Development lessons and general questions and concerns.

In the cadet sessions at Nevada Wing Conference, cadets and interested senior members were treated to presentations by Nellis personnel from the Communications division and the Base Honor Guard. The cadets were particularly interested in the honor guard, asking detailed questions. A DDR presentation included the opportunity for cadets to try on goggles that simulated different levels of alcohol intoxication.

A credible message
needs a credible messenger,
because charisma
without character is
catastrophe. -Peter Kuzmic

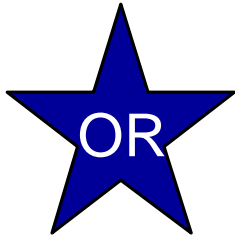
Douglas County Squadron cadet Grace Higgins received the NCO of the year award. Wing Commander Col. Dion DeCamp said, "Higgins has an excellent attendance record, has scored above 90% on her exams, participates with the cadet search and rescue program and exhibits excellent leadership potential. She has already earned her glider pilot license, and is working on her private pilot license. In the future she wants to become a glider CFI and earn her instrument rating.

Chaplain (Capt.) Elizabeth Tattersall
Nevada Wing Chaplain, Civil Air Patrol
PO Box 3388
Stateline, NV 89449-3388
fax 775-586-8200, voice 775-588-7558
flcg@nanosecond.com



Oregon Wing

News From Oregon



On October 1, 2005 Chaplain (Capt) Charlie Sattgast became the new Oregon Wing Chaplain, replacing Ch (Lt. Col.) Bob Ledden. Charlie comes to the chaplaincy with a varied ministry background. He is endorsed by the Foursquare Church, and has served over the years as a senior pastor, associate pastor, worship pastor, and children's pastor. He is currently serving in adult and family ministry in his local church and is back in school at Multnomah Biblical Seminary in Portland.

Charlie has been in CAP since 2001, and holds a technician rating in Cadet Programs in addition to his Chaplain master rating. He continues to serve Columbia Composite Squadron in Portland, and is active in Emergency Services as a mission chaplain in addition to several other Emergency Services specialties.

Chaplain (Capt) Charlie Sattgast, CAP
Oregon Wing Chaplain
503-618-9794
503-667-5070 FAX



Chaplain Randy Potter and his friend entertain at the Oregon Wing banquet.

Chaplain Chuck Ingram (center) receives the Order of Flat Stanley Award from Calif. Wing Chaplain Ward (left) while PCR Chaplain Woodward looks on (right).



Chaplain Del McLaughlin received special recognition at the CAWG Conference. From L to R: Col. Virginia Nelson, CAWG/CC; Chaplain Whit Woodard, PCR/HC; Chaplain Del McLaughlin; Chaplain Paul Ward, CAWG/HC; BGen. Rex Glasgow, former CAP Vice Commander; and Col. Merle Starr, PCR/CC

DIGNITY FOR THE BODY - PEACE FOR THE SOUL

JEWISH RITUALS RELATING TO DEATH

Compiled by Chaplain Chaim S. Kolodny

Senior Bureau Chaplain, LAPD

Reprinted with permission from the Journal of the International Conference of Police Chaplains

When a person dies, the soul or *neshama* hovers around the body. This *neshama* is the essence of the person, the consciousness and totality. The thoughts, deeds, experiences and relationships. The body was its container, while it lasted, and the *neshama*, now on the way to the Eternal World, refuses to leave until the body is buried. In effect, the totality of the person who died continues to exist for a while in the vicinity of the body. A Jewish funeral is therefore most concerned with the feelings of the deceased, not only the feelings of the mourners. How we treat the body and how we behave around the body must reflect how we would act around the very person himself at this crucial moment.

Shmira/The Vigil:

From the moment of death to the moment of burial, the body is never left alone. Now more than ever, the body deserves respect. After all, there is a real awareness around the body that know exactly what is going on. It would be insensitive to leave the body alone, without any attention, as if it were being discarded because it was no longer useful. Arrangements for a *shomer* or guard should therefore be made. These watchmen stay with the body day and night, reciting passages from the Book of Psalms. This lends great comfort to the *neshama* while it waits for the body's burial and its ascent to the Eternal World.

Taharat The Preparation:

The body leaves the world the way it entered. A newborn is immediately cleaned and washed when it enters the world. And so it is when a person leaves the world. After all, the soul is about to be reborn in a new spiritual world. We also believe that eventually the body will be resurrected in this world. A *Tahara* is performed by members of the *Chevra Kadisha* (Burial Society). This is a complete cleansing and dressing of the body, performed according to Jewish law and custom. Prayers asking for the forgiveness of the deceased and the soul's eternal peace are offered. While *Tahara* requires that the body be made as presentable as possible, embalming, cosmetizing or any other attempts to create a lifelike appearance through artificial means are contrary to Jewish Law.

Tachrichim/The Shroud:

Dressing for the final Yom Kippur. The *neshama* is about to face its final Judgment Day and clothes don't matter-good deeds do. That's why every Jew is buried exactly alike. In handmade, simple, perfectly clean, white linen shroud which includes a white linen hat, shirt, pants, shoes, coat and belt. Men are dressed in a *tallis* (prayer shawl). The shrouds have no pockets to accentuate the fact that no worldly belongings accompany him. The shrouds are modeled after the white uniform worn by the High Priest in the Holy Temple on *Yom Kippur* when he stood before God asking for the needs of his family and the entire Jewish people. These shrouds are therefore especially appropriate because each and every *neshama* asks for the needs of his or her family on the final Judgment Day.

Aron/ The Casket:

Allowing the body's natural return to dust to be as swift as possible. "For dust you are and to dust you shall return." This biblical teaching is what guides us in selecting a casket. The casket must not be made of a material that slows down the body's natural return to the elements. Metal caskets are therefore not permitted. Wood is the only material allowed and several holes are opened at the bottom to hasten the body's return to the earth. When vaults are required, they too should be open at the bottom. Caskets remain closed because viewing the body is seen as disrespectful and undignified and is therefore forbidden according to Jewish law.

Kvura BiKarka/In Ground Burial:

The natural decomposition of the body is of utmost importance in Jewish law. The *neshama's* return to heaven is dependent upon the body's return to the ground. That's what the Prophet means when he says, "The dust returns to the earth....And the spirit returns to God who gave it." Jewish law is therefore concerned with the immediacy of burial and the natural decomposition of the body. Mausoleums are generally not used since they retard the process of return to earth. Cremation is forbidden. The only acceptable burial is directly in ground, with family members and friends helping to fill the grave completely until a mound is formed. No attempt to retard the body's decomposition is permitted.

The Role of the Chevra Kadisha/Burial Society:

Preparing a body for burial is an especially great *mitzvah* (good deed). Throughout Jewish history, being a member of the *Chevra Kadisha* has been a great honor. Members of the Burial Society are selected for their character, integrity and personal devotion to Jewish tradition. These men and women are on call 24 hours a day, to perform a *Tahara* and to ensure that the laws and traditions of Jewish burial are executed properly. Their greatest concern is the sensitive care, modesty and dignity of the deceased. Men care for men, women care for women, Jew cares for fellow Jew. There is no better way to ensure the dignity of the body than to entrust its preparation to the *Chevra Kadisha*.

Often Raised Question & Answers:

Q. What are some of the Jewish customs relating to the funeral?

- a. Respect for the dead is honored. Judaism mandates that the body be treated with awe and reverence. Embalming or viewing of the body is usually not permitted because they tend to turn the person into a “thing”. The corpse is washed, wrapped in plain cotton or linen shrouds and buried in an unadorned wooden casket. The simplicity of shrouds and caskets may have been a way to avoid Egyptian excesses and also to protect the poor from embarrassment.
- b. The body is buried quickly, within 24 hours if possible. This is both a token of respect and a way of sparing the mourners’ feeling since the healing work of grief cannot begin until after the funeral. Jewish funerals are simple, even austere. One rarely sees flowers or hears music. The core of the funeral is the eulogy which focuses on the loss of a unique soul. The Jewish funeral liturgy does not speak of death as a “better place”. In fact the liturgy makes no mention of the afterlife, or of a reunion with God or with family members who have passed away. After the casket is lowered, family members shovel the first clods of earth onto it.

Q. What does “sitting Shiva” mean?

The term *Shiva* is derived from a Hebrew word meaning “seven”. It refers to the seven-day period of mourning which takes place following a burial. During this period of time family members suspend all worldly activities and devote full attention to remembering and mourning the deceased.

Q. Where does this ritual come from?

The earliest mention of a seven day period of mourning occurs in the Book of Genesis. It is said that after Jacob’s death, Joseph “made mourning for his father for seven days” (Gen 50:10) accordingly to Talmudic tradition at the time of Noah and the Flood, God Himself “mourned seven days for the destruction

of the world.”

Q. According to Jewish law, for whom is the observance of “Shiva” necessary?

These rites are observed for parents, a spouse, a child or a brother or sister. In the case of an infant of less than 30 days, there is no formal Shiva.

Q. When does Shiva begin and end?

Shiva begins on the day of burial and continues for seven days. During the Sabbath and any Holy Day (Yom Tov) there is temporary cessation in the rituals of mourning and in some cases, a Holy Day can completely suspend the sitting of Shiva.

Q. What are some of the common Shiva rituals?

- a. A tradition meal (“*seudat havra’ah*”) or “the meal of consolation after burial which consists of hard-boiled eggs and lentils, which by nature of their round shape symbolize the cyclical nature of life and the immortality of the soul. It is in effect, an affirmation that even in the face of death, life continues.
- b. Mourners sit on low stools to indicate their bereaved state.
- c. Mourners are prohibited from wearing leather, cosmetics, bathing and marital relations.
- d. During this time the only study allowed is of the books of Job or Lamentations or the texts on the laws of death and bereavement.
- e. Traditional morning and evening prayers are recited during which the traditional *Kaddish* prayer is recited. All prayers are recited within a *Minyan*, a quorum often adults, and throughout the 7 day period, friends, and family visit to offer support and condolences.
- f. A candle flame burns continuously in remembrance of the spirit of the departed soul.
- g. All meals during *Shiva* are prepared and served for the mourners. This ensures that the mourners will have sustenance during their times of sorrow; it also communicates to the mourners that there are people around them who can help them deal with the demands of life during this time of acute grief.
- h. The mourners wear a torn piece of clothing (*k’riah*).
- i. At the conclusion of the Shiva, mourners go out and walk around the block, signifying a return to daily living as well as a symbolic escorting of the soul of the departed.

Q. Why do Jews recite the Kaddish?

Kaddish, a prayer recited at virtually every Jewish worship service, makes no mention of death or mourning. Like the Christian Lord’s Prayer, *Kaddish* is a doxology—a litany of praise for God. However, the centuries-old association of *Kaddish* with bereavement and the familiar sound and cadence of the prayer make its recitation a form of comfort that transcends language.

This prayer is recited during prayer services for up to a year on behalf of parents, although it is generally recited for eleven months. For others it is recited for 30 days.

Q. What do you say to a mourner?

If you are not certain of what to say, be silent. And listen. It is helpful for mourners to be able to share their thoughts and feelings. One should try to ask questions that will allow them to talk with you about their grief and be less concerned about giving them advice on what they should be doing. Try to avoid clichés like “you’ll get over it”, or “time will heal you” or “be strong for your other children” which can be more harmful than good to the mourners who are still fresh in their grief.

Q. What do you tell young children about the Shiva?

It is important that young children be told what will be taking place during the Shiva. Even though sitting Shiva is not an obligation of children under 13, some children may want to be part of the Shiva for at least part of the time. It may help them deal with their own feelings of grief and loss. They should be involved and included to whatever extent is comfortable for both you and them.

Q. What other time periods are important for the mourners?

The first month is called “*shloshim*” (Thirty). The first year ends with a “*yahrzeit*” (year’s time) candle, lit in memory of the deceased. The “unveiling” of the headstone takes place anytime after Shiva and before *Yahrzeit*.

Q. What is the Jewish position on organ donation?

The mitzvah (commandment) of “saving a soul” (in Hebrew, *pikuah hanefesh*) is considered paramount and nearly all Jewish authorities now support organ donation.

Q. What are the customs relating to mourning a non-Jewish loved one?

The whole range of Jewish mourning customs is open to anyone mourning for a non-Jew. For example: Jews-by-choice say Kaddish for their non-Jewish parents; the death of a non-Jewish friend may prompt the wearing of torn ribbon (*k’riah*) that denotes a mourner; and anyone can light a *yahrzeit* (memorial) candle on the anniversary of a dear one’s death. Certainly, any synagogue member can request bereavement counseling from his or her rabbi, regardless of the deceased’s religion or his own. Rabbis can be thoughtful sounding boards for problems that may arise over conflicts where some members are more traditional than others. Shiva is a sanctuary for grieving. It follows the course of suffering; it confronts rather than evades the pain of separation. It provides a profound, though indirect healing

Regimen, that leads us out of the entanglements of grief to a full acceptance of our loss and takes us even further, empowering us to growth and self-realization. Time and space both seem infinite. To function is our world. We need finite boundaries (for which) there is no innate grid. When we apply these ideas to mourning, we discover that *shiva* is not simply carved from the calendar to sharpen our focus on what we have lost. It enables us as mourners to locate ourselves and orient ourselves in an environment distorted by the disappearance of a signpost.

Until the grave is covered and interment is completed, every aspect, including the eulogy, must be directed to the deceased, the center of concern. But after interment, everything undertaken must be supportive of the living. The comforters become the comforted; the active turn passive; ones who gave find themselves given to; those who fed the sick now find themselves being fed...we go in a split second from “concern for the dead” to “concern for the living. Death is the cost of life; suffering the death of close friends and relatives is the cost of having them. We cannot, and should not, combat the strange surges of our emotions, nor do we gain much by trying to explain ourselves to others or to ourselves. Let grief run its course, as it must.

We tend to view mourning as a single unwieldy burden, a heavy load that we struggle under and are sure will finally wear us down. But grief is likely to be triggered more by small details than by a solitary emotional upheaval. The natural antidote to suffering piecemeal is healing piecemeal. The strategy of healing during *shiva* is not to reduce the severity of sadness but to confront the source of sadness: the death.

Bumping into the odds and ends of memory is not an annoyance, not an aggravation of an already painful situation, but a necessary step in reorientation. Facing our grief acknowledges the value of certain practices, not directly taught by Jewish law but implicit in its style.

No two people mourn in the same way. As complex as we are in our physical makeup, we are equally complex in our psychological beings. That is why there can be no single answer to the problems of grief that so frequently stump us and no single medication to stimulate our souls immune system. Grief is an accumulation of energy in a person, and a major purpose of mourning is to successfully release that energy.